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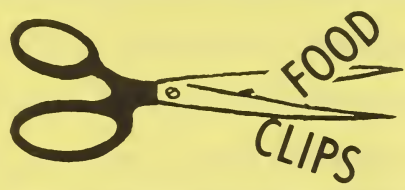
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# Food and Home Notes

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
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To remove the thick skins from chestnuts you might blanch them in boiling water and let them stand about two minutes. Remove a few at a time from the water and cool slightly, then peel with a paring knife. Roasting will also loosen the skins.

\* \* \*

For variety in winter meals, try sauces that brighten vegetables. A sweet-sour sauce is good with cooked drained onions, beets, or cabbage.

\* \* \*

Why is gelatin often added to canned hams? Gelatin is usually added to help hold the boned ham together during shipping. It is added in dry form just before the can is vacuum-sealed and cooked. It also thickens juices drawn from the meat and it fills the air space.

\* \* \*

Why is a shallow pan better than a deep one for roasting? It allows the necessary heat to circulate around the roast.

## ON LOW FAT DIETS —and Blood Pressure

Diet--not drugs--may be answer to lowering blood pressure according to a study released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The low-fat, low blood pressure study was primarily concerned with proper use of food by the population as a whole rather than with developments of treatments for people with cardiovascular disease.

Healthy volunteers between 40 and 60 years of age were used in this research because this is the group most affected by heart disease. The effect of different dietary fat levels in a real-life situation were used instead of a laboratory experiment. Meals were planned and prepared by professional nutritionists.

Agricultural Research Service of USDA and the Georgetown University School of Medicine, Washington, Washington, D.C. conducted this research. It is believed to be the first study to show that blood pressure can be lowered by reducing the level of fat in an otherwise normal diet.

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## IF RETIREMENT IS AHEAD —

What level of spending can be afforded during retirement? This seems to be the principal concern of people who are considering the retirement path, according to the Consumer and Food Economics Institute, a research agency in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This Agricultural Research Service section has assembled materials from budgeting research (for use by educators and families) and has developed a computer program called "Budgeting for Retirement."

Data may be entered into the computer about a person's anticipated income at retirement. The real purpose of the program is to help professional workers counsel families who are planning for retirement.

The operation works like this: A person sits down at a remote computer terminal and enters data about a family's anticipated income and spending plan. Research data stored in the computer is used to help evaluate the plan under various conditions -- high inflation, financial catastrophe, loss of a family member, or early retirement.

The program is limited to families of no more than ~~three persons~~ in which the head of the family is at least 55 years of age and family income is no greater than \$15,000. These limitations are necessary because many of the assumptions and data on which the program is based are not valid when any of these limits are exceeded.

The person using the program enters data and responds to questions from the computer. To get a feasible and satisfactory spending plan may take one or two tries; some plans take longer.

## —PLAN YOUR BUDGET FIRST

The real goal is that at the end of the program the user should not only have a usable spending plan for retirement, but also have learned what steps he must go through and what kinds of information he must have to make spending plans in the future. The objective is to teach the user how to recognize, evaluate and solve a problem, rather than to give the user a solution to a problem.

Some of the data available to be used in the program includes rates on the average expenditures of U.S. families, that is, a survey of consumer expenditures. Inflation rates based on the Consumer Price Index of the Bureau of Labor Statistics are used, and a scale for reducing expenditures for loss of a family member, and a minimum level of average expenditures are figured. An income tax computation and computation of current and future incomes and social security regulations are some of the other sources available.

It must be noted that this is not an investment management program.

~~The~~ The program is available in two ways. For those who have a computer system available, USDA will supply a program deck. The program is also available on the Computerized Management Network under the program name "Retir." Hookup is made by telephone. Details on either of these methods and questions may be answered by contacting Mrs. Lucile Mork, Consumer and Food Economics Institute, 341 FCB#1, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

## USED FURNITURE

## —How To Buy

If you choose carefully -- used furniture can be a good buy. Newspaper ads, bulletin boards, garage sales, auctions -- there are any number of places where you can find good, substantial furniture at low cost. You must choose carefully, however, and know what you need most, according to housing specialists at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Budget limited? You can use your own creativity and refinish or repair some pieces that might be purchased for a few dollars.

When you go to look for such bargains for your home you might make a five point check-list. 1) What will the furniture be used for -- a couch that will also serve for sleeping, or just one to sit on? 2) Check the framework--is it put together on a good frame? 3) Look carefully at the legs of furniture, especially if they are small. Are they well-balanced? 4) Are the drawers suitable -- painted or varnished? Unfinished wood swells in damp weather and causes drawers to stick. 5) Is the piece of furniture repairable? Can you do the work yourself or does it require professional skill?

You can seldom return used furniture, so know what you are buying. It can be a good buy -- if you choose wisely.

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